

An Account of a PAPER, presented to the GENERAL ASSEMBLY, October 1690. Containing the Complaints of many Presbyterian People, living in several Shyres of Scotland. And now a Second time with Additions offered to their Consideration.

AS Union in Truth and Duty is a great Mercy and Blessing, and ought carefully to be intertained and maintained, so Division is alwayes to be wearied of as a Misery, and all lawful and honest Endeavours to be made use of, for healing the Breach: Of both these, the Church of Scotland hath been partaker in a great measure; Sometime indeed this Church was famous for Union, and did share of the Blessings, which usually attends such a happy Condition; Nevertheless of late, she hath been much rent with Divisions, and broken with Breaches, caused by the sad Defections and Back-slidings where-in many of her Members, in the late desyling and unhappy times were involved; Against which, we thought it our duty to bear Witness and Testimony, by withdrawing from these, guilty of, and defending the same, out of Love to them, and that they might be convinced and ashamed thereof; But albeit we did withdraw from many *Presbyterian* Ministers, (whom notwithstanding we loved and revered) involved in, and defending several of these Defections, seeing no other way left us in that broken and confused state, of freeing our selves, from partaking in the same thereof; yet we never owned or looked upon it, as a separation from the Church of Scotland, or the Ministry thereof, or so stated it, as that we would never more Unite: For as alwise we declared our willingness to joyn again, when ever we could have the opportunity without Sin; So of late we gave a demonstration thereof, in applying to the *General Assembly*, by offering to them a *Paper*, containing our *Complaints*, which we earnestly desired might be Heard and Redressed; that so our Union after so long an interruption, might be the more comfortable. A brief account of the Management of which *Paper* followeth.

When it was known, that there would be an *Assembly*, it was judged requisite, we should lay hold upon that opportunity to remonstrate and represent to them our *Complaints* and *Grievances* (under which we had been groaning) and seek Redress of the same, and that these Defections and Corruptions might be condemned, which had offended us, and caused our withdrawing in the broken Case foresaid, that so our Union might be with the greater comfort. Upon which a *Paper* being drawn up, it was brought to one of our *General Meetings*, where it was agreed, to the End all our Friends concerned therein might be thoroughly informed of the said *Paper*, that Coppies should be written and shown to our Societies, who might consider thereof, and send two or three, or more of their number unto *Edinburgh*, to Subscribe it in their Name. According to which conclusion, some Persons, from several places of the Countrey, came to *Edinburgh*, where the *Paper* was subscribed by sundry Hands, in name of many others. The Tenor whereof followeth.

To the MODERATOR, and Remnant Members of this Reverend
GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The COMPLAINTS and Humble PETITION of many Presbyterian People,
 Living in several Shyres of Scotland.

Seeing the Lord in the riches of His infinite Mercy, wherein He hath abounded towards this Generation in the late Revolution of Providence, far beyond all possible Acknowledgements, hath been pleased to grant at length this long wanting, long wished and prayed for Privilege, of seeing a free General Assembly of Presbyterian Ministers, gathered and senced in the Name of our Lord JESUS; We cannot, dare not, and must not omit this Opportunity of Applying our selves thereunto, for a Redress of these many long lasting Complaints and Grievances, under which we have Groaned these many years; The chiefest, bitterest, and most burdensome of which (tho we have not wanted our share of other Burdens and Afflictions very heavy) hath been, and yet remains to be, even in this Plenty, our scarcity and famine of Gospel Ordinances, wherein we have languished of a long time, sighing over our silent Sabbaths, as Sheep scattered without a Shepherd fainting for hunger, at the head of every Street, and pausing after the green Pastures and pleasant Water-brooks of the Preached Gospel; And yet scarred and made to stand aloof from it, by the Scandalings, Frenzies, Defections and Divisions of these unhappy times past; Which, as it hath been our greatest sorrow, so no comfort on this side Heaven, could be so desirable, as to re-enjoy and recover again access with clearness to pure and powerful Gospel Ordinances, without which we shall never have a pleasant day in the greatest abundance of all our outward peace. It was truly, Right Reverend a Reproach upon us most heavy to bear, that we were called Despisers of the Gospel, and of the Ministry thereof, which yet so far as we had clearness and access, we sought after and followed, even upon the hazard of our Lives, so earnestly, that no terror of Persecutors could drive us from the pursuit of it: And nothing moved us to withdraw from these Ministers, who neckered themselves rejected by us (whom nevertheless we loved and respected, and do highly honour and reverence) but their sad Involvements in the Defections of the late desyling and unhappy times; seeing no other way left us in this broken state, of keeping up a Testimony against the same, and freeing our selves from partaking in the sin thereof, but that abstraction in these circumstances, which we never looked upon, as a Separation from the Reformed & covenanted Church of Scotland, (as it more fully shewed in our Informatory Vindication, which we here Homologate) but only from the Defections or Sins of which many of her Members were guilty; and not that we should never unite more upon any Conditions: For Schism is, and ever was equally hateful to us as sin in Union; and we are now, and alwise were, most desirous to Joyn again, in terms most pleasing to the LORD, edifying to the Church, and satisfying to our Consciences. We are not far imposing Terms, giving Directions, or prescribing Rules to Ministers, more than we are to be imposed upon, and implicitly led by them; yet seeing People are allowed of the LORD, sometimes in sobriety, to say to Archippus, Take heed to the Ministry, which thou hast received in the LORD, and fulfill it; And when Offences are given by Ministers, it is Peoples Priviledge to plead for the removing of them, in a Christian way, to the satisfaction of the offended Party. We humbly conceive, in order to the removal of the many Offences given and taken, in this our day, in order to our comfortable Reconciliation together, and that we may be reconciled to the LORD, and His wrath turned away, that Confessing, Repentance and Condemning the Courses that have been so offensive, is very necessary. And seeing in merciful Providence, there is a Door opened, whereby ye have access and capacity to fall about Building the Temple of the Lord,

cleansing is from these filthy matters. In these times of Defection bygone, it hath been desired, and removing these Stumbling-blocks which have offended the Conscience of many tender and simple People: Therefore, in all Humility and Reverence, we must take the freedom to represent to this Reverend Assembly, in a few particulars, what things chiefly have stumbled us, and occasioned our withdrawing for so long a time, from many Ministers of this Church, which we cannot omit to Complain of and Protest against: Deserving hereby notice without offence, nor in any the least of any open unto the World, nor to plead our own Innocence, but desiring to acknowledge our deep accessions also to the Sins, which hath provoked the LORD to all this anger against this Church and Kingdom: That which hath drawn from us, the mentioning of these things, is that the remembering of them, may help us all to the sight and sense of these Sins amongst others, that we may be found Mourning for them, and keeping up a Testimony against them: And so show our earnest desire of having Peace and Truth, Union and Order, among all the Lovers and Well-wishers of Zion, settled upon Lasting and Solid Foundations and Comfortable Communion in Ordinances reformation who have been long driven away, from that Benefice, by these offences.

As it was not a little afflicting to behold, so it is now no pleasure to remember, that when Prelacy, condemned in the Word of GOD, and abjured by our Covenant, was established, many Ministers did bear and joyn with these perjured Hyrlings and Intruders the Prelates and their Curates. Yea and perswaded others to the like Practice: Whereby their hands were strengthened, and the Means of many of the Godly were sadned, and their Consciences stumbled: We desire to be thankful that Prelacie is condemned by Act of Parliament, nevertheless we are grieved that such Joyning and Complying therewith is not yet condemned, nor the Practice of these that withdrew approved.

As it was no small grief of heart to see the Supremacy, which belongs only to the Lord JESUS, as King and Head of His Church, given away to a miserable Mortal, and sealed upon him by Law; so it was an augmentation to our Sorrow, to see an Indulgence flowing therefrom, clogged with Restrictions, very prejudicial to the honour and freedom of Christs Ambassadors, embraced by several Ministers, and justified by others, which did much strengthen these wicked Usurpations on our Lords Crown Rights, & His Churches Liberties, and gave occasion of great Stumbling and Offence, and was a Bone of Contention among the Lords People in this Land. But yet tho' both the accused Fountain, and impure Stream be removed and cut off, for which we desire to Bless the Lord, the Sin thereof nevertheless is not Confessed and Condemned; the doing whereof we are perswaded, would be very contributive to the turning away of the Lords anger, and satisfying all offended.

It was very Stumbling and Offensive to us, when many Snares and Temptations were abounding and going through the Land, that then many Ministers who should have Preached in Season, and out of Season, and whom no Dispensation could discharge from that great and necessary Duty, did not set the Trumpet to their mouth, to give faithful warning in times of such danger, as became Watchmen; but tho' often called to Preach in the Country, did either faintly leave the Land, or lurked and lay by in the Land, and others when they Preached, either did not apply their Doctrine to the Times, so as we might take it up, or were ambiguous in their Application of their Doctrine to the dangers of the Times, whereby many were left to perish in their iniquity, and the hands of these who endeavoured to keep clean Garments, were not strenghtned: Yea, it was very offensive to behold the practice and carriage of some Ministers, who instead of strengthening their hands, who were at that time most forwardlie and zealousie appearing and contending for the Cause and Interest of CHRIST, and joyning with, countenancing or encouraging the Ministers, who were Valiant for the Truth, and

Jeopardied their Lives, in the high places of the fields, for the Testimony of CHRIST, did commend their laudable endeavours, and reproached them, and their afflictions and sufferings, both at home and abroad.

More especially it was sad and stumbling to us, when many Mischiefs were framed into Laws, by a Throne of Iniquity, when many wicked Oaths and Bonds, ensnaring Consciences, contrary to the Word of GOD, and our National Covenants were imposed; and when we were required upon pain of Death, to owne the Authority of, and acknowledge Allegiance to Tyrants and Usurpers, as our Lawful Magistrates, whom GOD had set over us, as His Ministers of Justice, that then many Ministers, did comply with these wicked Laws, and taught the People to obey them, and some did take and subscribe these Oaths and Bonds themselves, and persuaded People to take them, and not only owned and acknowledged Allegiance to these Tyrants and Usurpers, prayed for them and their Government, and pleaded for the Lawfulness of their Authority; Yea, some prayed for the pretended Prince of Wales: But instead of sympathizing with the sufferings of these that could not in Conscience owne that Authority, condemned and inveighed against them as fools, and dying in an error. We have reason to be thankful for this reviving in our Bondage, and that the yoke of Oppression and Persecution is taken from off our necks; yet we wish that untender carriage towards conscientious Sufferers were reſented, and the Heads and Causes were approved and justified, upon which these reproached Martyrs and Confessors suffered.

It was very burdensome to our Consciences, that a Popish Toleration designed to introduce Popery into this Land again, granted by K. James from his absolute Power, which he blasphemously arrogated to himself, and whereby he presumed to stop the Penal Laws against Papists, and clogged with many Limitations, was embraced by many Presbyterian Ministers, and Addressed for, to that Popish Usurper, in the Name of ALL: Which many of the Godly of the Land looked upon with weeping eyes, as a sad step of Defection from the wonted Zeal of the Ministers of Scotland; The Sin and Scandal of this course is evident in a Testimony given in against the same, by some Ministers, which we here own: Yet now, notwithstanding that it be removed, and the wicked power it flowed from, we cannot think the Sin and Scandal of it is taken away, so long as the same is not confessed, mourned over and condemned.

The condemning of all these Courses of Compliance and Defections, would not only be as a Beacon set up to hinder the following Generation from splitting on such dangerous Rocks, but also will make our Uniting and Joyning with these, from whom we stand at a distance (which we long for, and pray for) cordial and comfortable.

We are also dissatisfied and offended at several things at present; It might have been expected, that the Mercies we have met with of late, should have filled our Hearts with kindly sorrow for our former Sins and Backsliding, and inflamed the Souls of all the Lovers of Christ, with more Zeal, for advancing and promoting Reformation in this Land, according to the capacity and opportunity the Lord hath put in their hands; But alas! unfuteable hath been our Returns of Fruitfulness and Thankfulness; And as all of us have come far short of improving these Opportunities, so the practice of these Ministers continues to be very offensive and stumbling, who instead of Confessing and Condemning the above written Defections, and minding the People of their former Backslidings, and discovering the Sins of the late times, that were many and heinous, so the end, they may be induced to mourn over them, and to turn unto the Lord, do yet continue to defend and hide their own guilt, and thereby to harden others in Impenitency; So that the wrongs done to Christ, are like to be forgotten and buried, and few are like to be brought off from the evil of their ways.

We are also much discouraged and dissatisfied, that the National and Solemn League and Covenants, have not only not been renewed, but not contended for by many, the affront done to them, and their binding force not declared, but like to be buried in oblivion. And more especially it was mourning to us to hear, that when opportunity was given, and access to Address the King and Parliament, the mentioning of these holy Covenants was omitted. And since the King and Queen were advanced to the Throne, we fear that that faithfulness & freedom hath not been used as was wont to be in former times, to warn and admonish their Majesties, of the Sins and Snares of the Throne, to denounce of evil Counsellors, and of the guilt and danger of rumping with, and patronizing Prelacie in England and Ireland, nor to discover and declare to them, and the Parliament, the Sin and danger of bringing in, and keeping in places of Power and Trust, in Judicatories and Armies, Persons who are known Malignant Enemies to Truth and Godliness, and to the present Interest now to be maintained, as faithful Ministers in former times used to witness against such sinful Associations; and after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and have gotten such a deliverance as this, if again His Commandments be broken, by joining in affinity with the People of these abominations, it will be more than ever dangerous both to King and Kingdom.

Likewise, albeit we dare not despise the day of small things, and desire to bless the Lord for what we have seen; yet we cannot conceal our sorrow, that the great and glorious Attainments betwixt the year 1638 & 1649, being years of the right Hand of the Most High, in which we were brought under the renewed Bond of Solemn Covenants, are not revived, nor any honourable mention made of them, in any of the Acts, establishing the Privileges of the Church, which we think a losing of the ground which our Fathers gained. We do not say, that it was in the power of Ministers to redress this, before or after, it was done; yet as we conceive the pleading for the full of this in their Address, was not above their reach, and that they should have signified their dislike at the want thereof, and taken what they got by these Acts, with a Protestation, that it should be without prejudice of their seeking and getting more; so in our poor Judgement, we think in all Establishments of Religion and religious Rights in a Land, respect is alwayes to be had to the Pattern and Rule of GOD's revealed Will in His Word, and not to Worldly Politicks.

It is also very discouraging and offensive, and we cannot but complain of it, that now when there is an opportunity to purge the Church from these Corruptions, wherewith she hath been long pestered and plagued; yet the Prelacy be abolished by the State, and many Curats put away, some one way, some another, we hear of none censured and removed for Prelacy, Perjury and Intrusion, and some Ministers are also pleading for keeping them in, upon Carnal and Politick grounds, who we fear may afterwards do more Hurt and Mischief, than the Good now pretended can countervail; And that if this occasion be lost of purging the Church of insufficient, corrupt and scandalous Officers of all sorts, especially of Prelatick Curats, and of planting it with Godly, faithful, and able Ministers, we may all repent of it too late.

More especially, It is very stumbling and offensive to us, that albeit there be an opportunity without fear and danger to exercise Discipline impartially and faithfully; yet some who have formerly taken the abominable Test, and are guilty of other gross Scandals, are admitted to be Officers of the Church, some to be Ministers, and some to be Elders, and many guilty of very gross degrees of Compliance, are admitted to the Sacrament, without any publick Acknowledgement of their Offences.

ces, whereby they and others are hardened, and many of the Godly stumbled, to the great disadvantage of the Church.

To conclude, Right Reverend, we expect and intreat, that ye will not offend at our freedom, in what we here Represent; but our meaning and end to have differences satisfyingly removed, will move you, to put a favourable construction upon that, which a Critical Disposition, might be ready to censure for rashness and ignorance, and meddling in matters wherein we are not concerned: But tho we should be condemned and censured with the greatest severity, and be counted yet more vile, we must seek, we must cry, for the removing of these Stumbling Blocks, and condemning these Courses, which have done our Lord JESUS so much wrong, and His Children so much hurt, in the standing in the way of their comfortable and edifying Communion with the Church; Let the famishing and starving case of our Souls, through want of the Blessed Gospel, and our hungering to hear it preached by you, prevail with you to consider our Complaints, and let the Wounds of our bleeding Mother, panting to be healed by the Hand of the tender hearted Physician, have weight with you not to slight or despise our Desires: But if ye shall shut your eyes and ears at them, then we know at the time, no Remedy left us, but to Complain and Protest unto Judicatories; and cry, sigh and groan to the Father of Mercies, who is tender of all His Little ones, and is the Hearer of Prayer, that He may see to it, and heal our Backslidings and Breaches in His own time and way, and not lay it to your charge, that ye have had so little regard to the stumbling and saddening of so many of His poor, broken, bruised, and scattered Sheep, and that ye have not had greater care to strengthen the Diseased, and to heal that which was sick, and to bind up that which was broken, and to bring again that which was driven away, and to seek that which was lost.

After Subscribing of the Paper, some Men were chosen in name of the rest, to present it to the Assembly, to desire an Answer, and to use diligence therein, of which they were to give an account to their Friends: But the delivering of it in was thought requisite to be delayed a little until it was known, what would be done with a Paper given in to the Assembly by Mr Thomas Lining, Mr Alexander Shields, and Mr William Boyd; yet tho it be not expedient to relate either the issue of that business, or how the same was managed, nevertheless it is not unsuitable to the present purpose to mention this, that instead of a satisfactory Answer, it was very offensive to many, that the Assembly by a Vote refused to read the foresaid Paper presented by the Ministers above named, upon the Reasons given in by the Committee of Overtures, why it should not be read, which condemned the same, before it was heard; especially the persons entrusted with the subscribing and ingiving of our Paper, and some others were so offended, that they judged it duty to signify their dissatisfaction therewith to the Assembly: Whereupon a short Paper being drawn up, was subscribed by the Men (chosen to deliver the other Paper) in their own Name; Representing it as an additional Complaint, that the Assembly had, in the manner above specified, refused to read the foresaid Paper.

To get opportunity for delivering in both these Papers to the Committee of Overtures, by whom they might be transmitted to the whole Assembly, the Men went to the place where the said Committee was sitting, where meeting with two Ministers (Members thereof) and after some conference with them, concerning the Papers; One of the Ministers said, he would inform the Committee of them; Accordingly they having both gone in, acquainted the

the Committee therewith, who (instead of giving the Men access, a priviledge denied to none but them) only nominate two Ministers and a Ruling Elder, to speak with them: These immediately coming out, had conference with the Men: Before whom first the short Paper, next the Larger were read; After hearing both, and desiring some things to be altered in the large Paper (which could not be condescended unto) they endeavoured to dissuade the Men from pressing the reading of them in the Assembly; which the Men insisted earnestly for, and for an Answer to return to their Friends: When these Ministers found them so pressing for this, they promised to represent it to the Committee; whereupon one of them went in, spoke of it to them, and delivered the Papers to the Clerk: After this, the Men at several occasions, solicited the Ministers above mentioned, and some others, that the Papers might be read in the Assembly, and to have somewhat to return to their Friends: But the Answer they received, was a Letter subscribed by three Ministers, direct to them: Which followeth.

Loving Friends,

THE Papers you gave in to the Assembly, were first given in to the Committee of Overtures, and we were by them appointed to confer with you; And after some conference with you, we moved in the Committee, that the Assembly would order the Papers to be given in to these, who were to draw up the Monitory Letter, and causes of the Fast, that they might make their own use thereof, in drawing up the same: Which at the first next Session of the Assembly, on Saturday last, the first of November, was accordingly done in open Assembly, and we by the Assembly allowed to report the same to you; which now accordingly we do: And we hope this will satisfy you, and others who did commissionate you; and that the Lord will incline your Hearts to Peace, and to guard against any further rent in the Church of GOD; and in this hope we subscribe our selves,

Edinburgh, Novem-
ber 3. 1690,

Your Friends and Servants
in the LORD.

FROM which Letter, we shall only take notice of this, that as we have never yet seen the Monitory Letter mentioned therein, whereby we do not know what use is made in it of our Paper; so albeit we have got a sight of the Causes of the Fast, from which it was said (several times) that we should receive Satisfaction to our Scruples, yet we are so far from getting of the same, that we must Complain, not only of the ambiguity of some Expressions in it, but also of its Lameness, several things being omitted, which are steps of Desfections and Causes of Wrath; And that the abominable Test, Declaration, Prelatical Intrusions, being once in, were put out again.

We hope, as well as Seriously desires, that our design in Publishing what is above, may not be mistaken, but rightly Constructed, seeing it is not to irritate or offend any Person; But to make manifest what hath been our endeavours, in order to get a Comfortable Union, with these Ministers, from whom we are yet standing at a distance: As also to let them know, how unexpected, yea astonishing it was to us, when we heard that our Paper of Complaints, was so little regarded, as not once to be read, either in the Committee, or open Assembly; It contained what really was and is ground of offence and matter of Complaint to us; And whatever was pretended for not reading thereof, yet the Consequences hath

both been sad, having created Jealousies, Scruples and Discontents, and hath been the occasion of a further rent, for it could not be rationally expected, that to deny that privilege to them, which was granted to others, was the way to heal the breach, which was wide, and remove the Scruples that were many, of these, who are Conscientious; This was rather the way to soment new Debates and Jairs, then to cement, or remove the old: And in like manner that we may have opportunity and occasion hereby, again to debate of, and cry unto Ministers, not only for removing of our former Scruples, and redressing of our old *Complaints* and *Grievances*, but also to *Represent*, some *New Ones*, which are not only burdesome, grievous and offensive to us, but to many of the Godly in the Land; earnestly intreating, and fervently desiring, that Ministers, may do what is incumbent for them, and in their Power, for removing of the same: One is,

The *Admission* of some of the *Prelatical Curats*, not only to the exercise of the Ministry, but to a share of the Government of this Church; of which, we crave leave to signify our dislike and dissatisfaction, and to testify against the Pestering and polluting the Church with them; In regard it is the receiving in of such Men whom the Scriptures declares should be avoided and with drawn from, because they have caused divisions and offences, contrary to the Doctrine which this Church learned, and walked not only disorderly themselves, but many of them compelled others to do so, and Persecuted these who desired to keep their Garments clean; In regard it is unreasonable, and not consistent with policy, to put *Weapones* in the Hands of *Enemies*, lest they may turn them against us, if not openly, yet in a way as dangerous; Yea it is not long since all of them were Reckoned *Such*: And whatever some of them pretend to now, yet the time of this Change makes the sincerity of their Repentance strongly suspicious, neither does it seem reasonable or safe to admit such Men to a share of the Government, who opposed the same, while Power was in their Hands, or to commit to them the care of Souls, who formerly have poisoned and done great hurt to many of them; In regard they are incapable to give security, for their being Faithful, and true to the Government, as is required in the Instructions given by the Assembly, being Men, not only guilty of Intrusion, dreadful Apostacy, advancing the kingdom of Satan, persecution (some one way, some another) of the Godly, and not a few of them, of profanity and error, but also of gross perjury by taking wicked and contradictory *Oaths*, as that abominable *Test &c.* And teaching others to do so, all repugnant to our *Solemn Covenants*, whereby they have forefaulted the Honour of any *Trust* amongst Honest Men, much more in such great and weighty matters, as are the having a share in the Government of *CHRISTS* House, and the care and oversight of Souls; In regard the taking in of these Men, will tend to the present hurt of the Church, seeing it will occasion a great Breach and Division in the same, which will do much more hurt, than all the good these Men will do, can countervail; In regard it will tend to the prejudice of the Posterity, whose advantage should be sought, by endeavouring to transmit pure Ordinances to them, which we think cannot well be done, and those preserved entire, if these Men be entrusted with the dispensing of them: For as they are known formerly to be of corrupt Principles and Practices themselves, and the soundness of the Change, that they make, considering the time thereof (beside other things) being greatly to be feared, so they will endeavour by degrees to bring in others of the same Stamp, whereby at length (others dying) a little Leaven may leaven the whole Lump, and so the ordinances be in great danger of being corrupted, if not Changed, which will tend to the unspeakable disadvantage

of the Psesticity. And to regard it will tend to the hurt of those Men themselves, seeing to admit them to such a great Trust, so easily and hastily may harden them in their former evil wayes; whereas a more strict and sharp dealing, according as the rules of Discipline prescribe to take with such scandalous persons, might by the Blessing of the LORD bring them to a sight and conviction of the same. These, and many other reasons that might be adduced, have weight with us; and we are hopeful will so far prevail with Ministers as to withstand and oppose (now when they have power and opportunity) the polluting and pestering the Church, and any mixing with the Men of these Abominations, notwithstanding of what *Authority* may enjoyn: But if it shall be otherwayes, as it will presage sad things to this poor Church and Kingdom, so it will give ground of Sumbling at others.

In like manner, as it is offensive and stumbling to us, that some Ministers and Elders hath been admitted to be constituent Members of the *Assembly*, who are so heinously guiltie and were so deeply involved in the defections of the late detestling times, as by the Word of GOD, and Constitutions of this Church, would debar them; So it cannot but be more stumbling and is matter of Complaint, that albeit there were many Reverend and Worthy *Divines* in the *Assembly* and *Commission* thereof, yet oft times, when they have had publick matters to manage, and some things to put in Print, that such should have been appointed for that end, who are laxest, and deeply involved in that late defections; The sad effects and consequences whereof appears already, and certainly will be more evident afterwards, particularly by that Book Intituled *A second Vindication of the Church of Scotland &c.* Wherein the Author (who was employed for drawing up thereof, and does in name of the whole) not only gives ignominious Characters and Epithets, unto Honest and Consciencious Sufferers, but also condemns and disownes their laudable aCtings in easing the Church and themselves, in the *Inter regnum*, of these perjured hirelings and intruders, the *Curats*: Wherein we are concerned in it, we are so far from being ashamed thereof, that we stand not to let it be known, that we are chiefly sorry, we were not more active; And we may adventure with some confidence to say the like in behalf of others: And in some singleness of heart may add, that what we did therein, was from a Principle of Conscience, and as a Duty lying bound on us, and not (meerly) because they were our Persecuters.

Another thing offensive to us and many others, is the seldom mentioning of our *National and Solemn Covenants*, not only in Preaching, but at Baptizing of Children, at which time formerly it was usual to mention them, but now by some only darkly hinted at, and by others altogether laid aside; And it cannot but be grievous and wounding unto us, that the Author of the foresaid Book, should insinuat so much as it is concluded, so be done. We are not for giving directions unto Ministers; Nevertheless, we humbly conceive, we may safely complain of the silence of many of them, in this, especially, when it is like to produce such sad and lamentable effects, as the wearing out (among many) of the sense and impression of the obligation and binding force of these *Covenants*, and that not a few are like to forget, that the same hath been broken and burnt in this Land. Whatever difficulties are alleged, hindering the Solemn Renovations of them at this time, yet Ministers may even at this season, shew people that perjurie and breach of Covenant, are among the sins of the Land, and what way all ranks are guiltie of the same, as also that these *Covenants*

are still binding, and the obligation of them remains inviolable notwithstanding the
 iniquitous Law made against them in the late unhappy times.

Likeas, it is offensive to us, and many others, that Ministers have been so silent as to the
 encroachments already made upon the privileges of this Church, in putting a stop in a great
 Measure, to the putting out of the *Episcopal Clergy*, by which Reformation is hindered,
 and negligent, erroneous, insufficient and scandalous men are still kept in; And also the
 silence at the adjournment of the *General Assembly* by proclamation, whereby a Judicial
 Court is made like one of the civil Judicatories of the Nation; These Encroach-
 ments and Usurpations (against which we, for our parts, cannot but *Wrestle and Protest*)
 makes us afraid of the plague of *Erastianism* (of which we heartily wish we may be disap-
 pointed) the beginnings whereof, and the very appearance of a Supremacie over the Church
 of CHRIST, arrogate by King or Council, or any whomsoever, Ministers especially, ought to
 withstand, and not be hindered from asserting the privileges of His House, either for their
 honour, pleasure or persuasion of any Mortal, high or low, great or small.

To conclude, That it may be manifest for what end we mention these things, (which is
 not for pleasure to speak of them, or to make a noise about them, but from a fervent desi-
 re to have them redressed and removed) and that all concerned, may know how desir-
 ous we are of *Union* in the Lord, and what longing we have for the benefit of the Gospel
 in purity and power; Again and again we earnestly intreat and seriously beseeches that
 these our *Complaints and Grievances* above, may be laid to heart, and that some effectual
 way may be fallen upon to remove and take them away, which we long for, that so but the
union may be more comfortable, and we expect the Blessing of the Lord thereupon.